

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01746 301249Z

ACTION AID-59

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EB-08 DODE-00 CIAE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 MMO-01  
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7357

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1746

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID LE

SUBJ: DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS IN LEBANON: QUESTIONS OF POLICY

REF: (A) STATE 074585, (B) BEIRUT 1678

1. REFTEL POSES TWO RATHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS: ONE IS WHETHER WE SHOULD NOT BE CHANNELING AID THROUGH VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS AS WELL AS GOL AND OTHER IS WHETHER RELIEF SUPPLIES SHOULD GO TO PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS LEBANESE DISPLACED PERSONS. WE HAVE CONSIDERED THESE ISSUES THOROUGHLY AND HAVE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS.

2. WHILE THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID IN TERMS OF OUR OWN BOOKKEEPING PROCESSES FOR USING VOLUNTEER AGENCIES, IT WOULD UNBEARABLY COMPLICATE MATTERS HERE. GOL IS DOING TOLERABLE JOB OF DISTRIBUTING SUPPLIES GIVEN THE HORRENDOUS PROBLEMS IT FACES. IT HAS TAKEN POLICY DECISION THAT IT ALONE WILL MAKE DISTRIBUTION AND VOLUNTEER AGENCIES ARE NOT BEING PERMITTED TO DO SO. THEREFORE, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO WAY IN WHICH VOLUNTEER AGENCIES CAN TAKE ON THAT FUNCTION.

3. WE FURTHERMORE BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO ENCOURAGE GOL TO CONTINUE TO MONOPOLIZE THIS FUNCTION RATHER THAN LET IT BE DISSIPATED AMONG NUMEROUS VOLUNTEER  
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01746 301249Z

AGENCIES, MANY OF WHICH ARE MAKING NO CONTRIBUTION THEMSELVES BUT ONLY WANT TO DISTRIBUTE WHAT WE AND OTHERS ARE SENDING. IF GOL LETS CRS, FOR INSTANCE, UNDERTAKE DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES SENT BY US, IT WILL BE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO DO THE SAME FOR A NUMBER OF OTHER AGENCIES MUCH LESS QUALIFIED THAN CRS AND WE WILL HAVE AN EVENTUAL SERIES OF SCANDALS RESULTING FROM

EXCESS OF GLORIOUS FREE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, LEBANESE STYLE. WE BELIEVE PROBLEMS POSED FOR US BY CHANNELING SUPPLIES THROUGH GOL ARE MUCH LESS GRAVE THAN PROBLEMS WE WOULD FACE IF SUPPLIES WERE FRITTERED AWAY THROUGH THE LOWER BASTA RELIEF SOCIETY, ETC.

4. CHANNELING U.S. AID THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS REDUCES SOME OF COMPLICATIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE. AS WE POINTED OUT IN REF B, HOWEVER, ALL UN RESOURCES ARE BEING MOUNTED IN SUPPORT OF MAKING GOL SYSTEM WORK. BECAUSE OUR ASSISTANCE IS ALREADY GOING THROUGH THAT SYSTEM, WE PERCEIVE NO ADVANTAGE IN CONTRIBUTING THROUGH UN AGENCIES.

5. WHILE MISSION OF COURSE ENDORSES WORLDWIDE DISASTER RELIEF GOAL OF EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION, WE QUESTION ADVISABILITY IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF ASKING GOL TO PROVIDE AID TO PALESTINIANS. LEBANESE FEELING AGAINST PALESTINIANS, WHO BROUGHT PRESENT CRISIS DOWN ON LEBANESE HEADS, IS VERY STRONG. IN ASKING GOL TO GIVE AID TO PALESTINIANS WE ARE ASKING THEM TO HELP REFUGEES WHOSE POLITICAL GOALS ARE CONSIDERED LOCALLY TO BE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO THOSE OF THE GOL. THERE IS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR PALESTINIAN RELIEF. THERE IS NO SUCH AGENCY FOR THE LEBANESE. ASKING GOL TO PROVIDE AID TO PALESTINIANS IS TOO MUCH. IF USG WANTS  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01746 301249Z

TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES FROM SOUTH LEBANON, WE RECOMMEND THAT IT MAKE CONTRIBUTION FOR THIS PURPOSE DIRECTLY TO AN APPROPRIATE UN AGENCY.  
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## Message Attributes

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